



Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

Celebrating 33 Years of Leadership & Advocacy

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MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2009, in Room 140 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by 1st Vice President Janet A. Neal at 1:15 p.m. Roll call was taken by Ms. Martha Arana, Commission Staff. The following Commissioners were present at the meeting: 1st Vice President Janet A. Neal, 2nd Vice President John B. Troost, Commissioners Michael G. Gureckas, Maria Mustelier-Parrish, Alexia Teran, Wendy L. Welt, and Stephen Thompson, alternate for Wan Chun Chang. President Kecia B. Weller, Treasurer Bernard Siegel, and Commissioners Harley Rubenstein and Sheila D. Wright were not present.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 18, 2009 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Welt, seconded by Commissioner Mustelier-Parrish, and unanimously carried, the minutes for the meeting of January 18, 2009, were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Block provided public comment and reported that the State of California has a great deficit, which may result in tax increases. She added that Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa plans to run for another term as Mayor, and also for Governor of California. She will not support him.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There was none.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Martha Arana, Commission Staff, reported that Assembly Bill AB 1234 which became effective January 1, 2006, requires the County to provide “*Ethics Training*” to elected County officials, members of certain County commissions, and any County employee designated by the County to receive such training. This year, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) developed a web-based ethics training course, and DHR encourages Commissioners to complete the training on-line.

(Commissioner Sheila Wright joined the meeting.)

PRESENTATION ON THE MEDI-CAL PROGRAM – MS. BROOKE FOX, PROGRAM MANAGER, NATIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION, CHAMP PROGRAM

1st Vice President Neal welcomed, thanked and introduced Ms. Brooke Fox, Program Manager of the National Health Foundation, CHAMP Program.

Ms. Fox provided the Commission with a binder entitled, “CHAMP Outreach Training Disability Workshop” prepared by the National Health Foundation that contains a summary of the most common Medi-Cal programs available to individuals with disabilities. She reported that in response to the increasing California budget deficit, the Governor called a special session in November 2008 for which he proposed a series of mid-year budget cuts to close the budget gap. Shortly thereafter, on December 31st, he released limited details of the proposed 2009-10 Budget which outlined many similar cuts. Ms. Fox provided the following update on potential cuts and/or changes to programs impacting the disability community:

Recent Changes:

Medi-Cal Program

- Effective November 2008, Medi-Cal will no longer pay the Medicare Part B Premiums for certain individuals that are eligible for both Medi-Cal and Medicare. This change will only affect those dual eligible individuals who have a share of cost of more than \$500.

- Beginning in July 2008, the Deficit Reduction Act was implemented in Los Angeles County, resulting in a requirement that all U.S. Citizens and Nationals applying for, or enrolled in Medi-Cal, provide proof of identity and citizenship upon a new application and subsequent redetermination. However, there are a number of exempt categories, including: Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP), Medicare, Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), and Social Security Retirement Survivor's Insurance. Typical documents to establish identity and citizenship are a driver's license or a birth certificate, respectively; a passport fulfills both requirements.
- Effective January 2009, Medi-Cal is implementing mid-year status reports for children under the age of 21. Eligibility will be recertified every six months using the same guidelines that are in place for most adults. However, there are exemptions on these new reporting guidelines, for both, adults and children under the age of 21. They include beneficiaries who are disabled, beneficiaries over the age of 65, infants under the age of one year, and enrollees in a state breast or cervical cancer treatment program.

Proposals pending the amount of Federal funding to California resulting from the Stimulus Bill

Medi-Cal Program

- Eliminate dental and other benefits for adult Medi-Cal recipients. Other benefits include vision services, podiatry, and incontinence creams and washes.
- Require more low-income seniors and people with disabilities to pay a share of cost for Medi-Cal services. This would affect people whose incomes exceed the limit for Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary payment (SSI/SSP). Currently, an individual who is disabled can qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal if their income is below 127% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Reduce services to legal immigrants, including those in the U.S. for five years or less.
- Require undocumented individuals to reapply for Medi-Cal monthly to receive emergency services.

Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP)

- Reduce SSI/SSP grants to the minimum level required by federal law, for a reduced monthly SSI/SSP grant for an individual of \$803 starting March 1, 2009. The current SSI/SSP grant for an individual is \$830 monthly.
- Eliminate the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) beginning March 1, 2009, a program which provides cash assistance to elderly and/or disabled immigrants who are not eligible for SSI/SSP payments due to their immigration status.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program

- Eliminate domestic and related services for IHSS recipients with less severe impairments.
- Require IHSS recipients with less severe impairments to begin paying their own Medi-Cal "share of cost."

Ms. Fox offered to return and give updates on changes as the Stimulus package unfolds.

Following the presentation, in response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Fox agreed to assist the Commission in obtaining information in relation to:

- The process of filing complaints for providers that render substandard quality of care to Medi-Cal recipients.
- A contact number to obtain information on that status of payments, by Medi-Cal, to providers.

After discussion, Commissioner Gureckas thanked and commended Ms. Fox for the valuable information presented.

Commissioner Troost suggested writing a letter to the Board of Supervisor on behalf of the Commission to pose the Commission's concerns in relation to the potential Medi-Cal and other health and human services cuts for people with disabilities. 1st Vice President Neal suggested deferring discussion on this matter to the Community Service Committee prior to writing a letter to the Board of Supervisors. The Commission concurred with 1st Vice President Neal's recommendation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

There was none.

Public Relations Committee

Disability Network Radio Program KTYM 1460 AM

1st Vice President Neal reported that Ms. Noreen Vincent, Assistant City Attorney for the City of Los Angeles and first Executive Director for the Department of Disability was today's invitee to the "Disability Network" radio program hosted by the Commission on KTYM 1460 AM.

Events Committee

Access Awards Luncheon

1st Vice President Neal reported that the Committee agreed to display photos of past Bill Tainter Scholarship winners at the future Access Awards Luncheon to share with luncheon attendees.

Bill Tainter Scholarship Program

1st Vice President Neal reported that the Events Committee is still working on enhancing the methodology by which the Commission disburses the Bill Tainter Scholarships. She noted that some students who were given these scholarships in 2007 and 2008 have not completed the process to receive the 2nd portion (\$1,000) of the \$2,000 scholarship. She further added that due to the declining economy, the Commission is considering a tea reception rather than a brunch for the 2009 Scholarship Program.

Community Services Committee

There was none.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ASI Report

Mr. Kurt Hagen reported that the last Access Services, Inc. (ASI) Board of Directors meeting was held January 5, 2009. A report for this meeting was provided to the Commission on January 18, 2009. There has not been a meeting since that date. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 23, 2009.

He provided the Commission with a copy of the Access Services Rider Newsletter, Issue 1/2009. This issue: 1) discusses ASI's proposed fare structure change, and provides reasons for the proposed fare increases; 2) informs the public on scheduled community meetings to be held throughout the County to get feedback from riders and stakeholders on the proposed increases; and 3) informs the public and stakeholders about a scheduled public hearing at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration on March 18, 2009, at which public comment may be provided. More information may be obtained by logging onto: www.Asila.org or by calling ASI's Customer Service at (800) 827-0829 (Voice) or (800) 827-0829 (TDD).

1st Vice President Neal suggested that perhaps ASI could benefit from a fundraiser event that would generate revenue for ASI and increase public awareness. Mr. Hagen agreed to take her suggestion back to ASI.

MTA Report

There was none.

REPORT BY GORDON ANTHONY, SENIOR DEPUTY COMPLIANCE OFFICER

In the absence of Mr. Gordon Anthony, Mr. Kurt Hagen reported the following:

- Mr. Gordon Anthony is still out on leave. His return date is unknown at this time.
- The Office of Affirmative Action Compliance (OAAC) Disability Civil Rights Section has two new staff, and may attend a future Commission meeting if their schedules permit.
- OAAC Disability Civil Rights is still in the process of updating the final 24 departments in its project to update the County of Los Angeles' Transition and Self-Evaluation Plans. A target completion date is June 30, 2009.

ITEMS NOT POSTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

There were none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1st Vice President Neal reported that she has been invited to a press conference at which she believes a representative from the White House will be present. She asked the Commission for any concerns that they might want to share, as she would be delighted to bring these concerns to the press conference. She also reported that she will be meeting with the Honorable Councilmember Bernard Parks, Eighth District, to discuss disability related issues in this District.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of 1st Vice President Neal, seconded by Commissioner Gureckas, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m., in memory of Culver City Police Officer, Sergeant Curtis Massey and Ms. Vicky Frantz.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Janet A. Neal, 1st Vice President
John B. Troost, 2nd Vice President
Michael Gureckas
Maria Mustelier-Parrish
Alexia Teran
Stephen Thompson
Wendy L. Welt
Sheila Wright

Guests

Brooke Fox, MPH, Program Manager
Lynne-Ann McGrail, LifeSigns, Inc.
Johathan Gleicher, LifeSigns, Inc.
Jane Goodman, Total Recall
Magda Carrero, Eastern Los Angeles
Regional Center
Jesse Padilla, Eastern Los Angeles
Regional Center
Linda Block

Excused Absence

Harley D. Rubenstein
Bernard Siegel, Treasurer
Kecia B. Weller, President

Los Angeles County

Kurt Hagen, OAAC

Board of Supervisors

Martha Arana, Staff
Audra Galang, Staff

ASI

Luis Pacheco